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8 February 1985

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Possible de la Madrid Address to Congress

1. Mexican President de la Madrid probably would discuss Central America, among other issues, were he to address the US Congress in the near future. He commented on the subject during his speech to the US Congress last May, stressing that many of the causes of unrest in Central America are internal. Since that time, he has obliquely criticized US policy before a variety of audiences. In December, he publicly warned against "warmongering", an apparent reference to US concern over the arms buildup in Nicaragua.

2. Nonetheless, we think it unlikely de la Madrid would use an appearance before the Congress sharply to attack US policy on Central America. He is low-key by temperament and prefers to use aides, such as Secretary of Foreign Affairs Sepulveda, to lash out at antagonists. Sepulveda, who is often critical of Washington, has compared US policy on Central America with Soviet activities in Afghanistan.

3. We expect that de la Madrid in discussing Central America would emphasize to the Congress that a settlement is essential and still possible, notwithstanding a lack of trust among the parties. He would assert Mexican policy is aimed at averting an expanded war, avoiding foreign intervention in the affairs of Central American countries, and establishing a basis for a stable and lasting peace in the region. He would also note that despite differences over Central America, Mexico remains a friend of the United States.

4. We believe there is less likelihood de la Madrid would shift his approach and forcefully attack US policy on Central

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America. He could do so, however, if the Contadora talks appeared on the verge of collapse, if in Mexico's view Washington were preparing to take provocative action against the Sandinistas, or if Mexico's ruling party saw the need to arouse nationalist sentiment before midterm elections in July.

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